

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ABC REPORTS DROP IN THE NUMBER OF ALCOHOL SALES ATTEMPTS TO MINORS**

*Minor Decoy Grant Program Resulted in 836 Citations during First Year of Two-Year Grant*

**(Sacramento)** - Investigators of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) and local police report a significant drop in the number of alcohol sales to minors in California during the first year of a two year program. ABC statistics show that between October 1, 2004 and September 30, 2005 the violation rate on alcohol sales attempts to minors dropped from near 20% to below 15% statewide. ABC considers the two million dollar California Office of Traffic Safety Minor Decoy Grant as a strong reason for the decline. 29 local law enforcement agencies were awarded Minor Decoy Grants to work with ABC to combat the problem of underage drinking.

ABC and local police conducted 351 Minor Decoy Operations during the 12 month period resulting in 5,412 visits. 836 individuals were cited for alcohol sales attempts to minors. Operations were conducted throughout the State of California.

“The Schwarzenegger Administration is committed to combating the problem of underage drinking and creating safer and stronger communities,” said ABC Director Jerry Jolly.

Minor Decoy operations are compliance checks where minors, under the direct supervision of the investigators and/or officers, attempt to purchase alcohol from retail licensees. Those who sell to the minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business’s liquor license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunk driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980’s. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is below 15% percent.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

For more information on the Minor Decoy Grant Program, contact ABC Supervising Investigator Kathleen Lenihan at (916) 419-2507.

ABC is a Department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright-McPeak, a member of the Governor’s Cabinet.